

WA premier launches GE-BioPharmica project

Tuesday, 31 October 2006

MOLECULAR Discovery Systems (a subsidiary of ASX-listed Perth biotech company BioPharmica), GE Healthcare and the WA Government have launched a collaboration that will see cell-based imaging equipment – the first of its kind in Australia – used to analyse tissue from more than 500 breast cancer patients whose samples form part of the WA Research Tissue Network.

The collaboration was announced this morning by WA Premier Alan Carpenter at an event held at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR).

GE's IN Cell Analyzer imaging technology will provide the researchers with a rapid way to determine which genes may be of use for new tests or treatments for diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

Molecular Discovery Systems chief executive Dr Sam Gallagher said: "Before this type of equipment became available we couldn't see what was happening around the gene – it was like a black box – so being able to actually watch what's going on in real time can help us better understand how the disease operates."

Carpenter added: "This sort of partnership showcases WA's skills and services to the world market and will help us ensure science and innovation plays a key part in ensuring WA's economic growth, creating jobs and allowing economic diversification."

WAIMR director Professor Klinken welcomed the alliance, which will see Molecular Discovery Systems and its WAIMR-based researchers work with GE Healthcare teams in the US, UK, Australia and Singapore.

HLS5, a gene discovered by Professor Peter Klinken and his team and now being commercialised by BioPharmica, is set to be the first gene investigated in the study.

GE Healthcare Australia/New Zealand president Stephen McIntyre said: "Cooperative efforts like this one see our vast experience come into play, and ensure our advanced technology is used to support innovative, groundbreaking and necessary research projects."

BioPharmica director Charles Murphy agreed and added: "In some areas of the collaboration one party will own intellectual property and in other areas Molecular Discovery Systems and GE Healthcare will share it."

Under the new alliance Molecular Discovery Systems will also offer consultancy services to GE Healthcare and position the WAIMR laboratories as a "Show Site", a way for GE Healthcare to showcase its technologies to its Asia-Pacific partners and customers.



Malcolm Lyons at WAIMR with GE IN Cell Imaging equipment

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